



Families

How Can We Decrease Childhood Overweight in Utah?

In 2006, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. released the *Utah Blueprint to Promote Healthy Weight in Children, Youth, and Adults*. The goal and objectives below are taken from that document. The document is available at <http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/docs/obesityblueprint.pdf>.

GOAL: Utah families will assume an active role in addressing childhood overweight.

Objective: Ensure that families have the skills, knowledge, and resources to offer healthy food choices to children and encourage physical activity within the family structure.

- Conduct a family-based community needs assessment and identify available resources.
- Develop health communications messages for families that are simple, consistent, and action-based to encourage healthy eating and physical activity.
- Work with public health, community health, and other segments of the community to provide education regarding the benefits of breastfeeding.



Objective: Promote partnerships among agencies that work with families to increase opportunities to provide consistent messages.

- Develop partnerships among local health departments, the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, and Women, Infants, and Children's Food Program (WIC) that will lead to consistent nutritional education messages and promote healthier food choices with available resources to low income families.
- Develop partnerships with grocery stores and fruit and vegetable producers to develop point of purchase health messages, allow for sampling of healthy foods, and make healthy recipes available.
- Create partnerships in local communities among businesses, churches, recreational facilities, and schools to increase participation in neighborhood walking/cycling groups, and to sponsor recreational activities with no charge for participation.
- Identify additional partners to provide assistance for family-based activities, assist the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), local health departments, and WIC in developing materials and messages that help recent immigrants maintain or adopt healthy eating habits in their new environment.

Objective: Engage businesses to assist families with healthier lifestyle options.

- Work with health insurers to provide reimbursement for individual and family counseling on healthy lifestyles, to provide reimbursement for community- or hospital-based prevention courses, and to ensure that all Utah families have access to regular preventive health care which includes assessment of weight status and effective treatment.
 - Work with the recreation and ski industries to jointly promote inexpensive equipment rental, lessons, and ski opportunities for Utah families.
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Examples of Success:

Women, Infants, and Children Food Program (WIC): WIC has implemented a goal setting process in all WIC clinics which is designed to assist WIC moms in setting an achievable healthy nutrition goal. All pregnant WIC moms are supported in maintaining the recommended amount of weight gain during their pregnancy and activities that are done together as a family are strongly encouraged and supported. Such family activities might include walking the family pet(s) together in the neighborhood, going on a family picnic in one of the local canyons, and exploring the Utah National Parks. WIC staff also make appropriate referrals for additional family support with weight management issues and provide healthy recipes on a regular basis. In addition, educational materials such as *How Can I Help My Child Have a Healthy Weight* are disseminated through WIC clinics in Utah. Web site: <http://health.utah.gov/wic/>.

Utah Breastfeeding Coalition (UBC): UBC focuses on breastfeeding education for all health care providers and increased outreach activities to the general public. The Coalition is active in exhibiting and presenting at workshops and conferences such as *The Mommy's Market*, *Successful Mothering Convention*, Utah Dietetics Association Conference, and the Nutrition & Food Science Conference. A major event which reaches many individuals with a positive breastfeeding message is the *Breastfeeding Café*. The *Breastfeeding Café* is an interactive, educational display offered daily during August (Breastfeeding Month) at the Salt Lake City Public Library. This café offers educational workshops, seminars, materials, references/resources related to breastfeeding promotion, support, and lactation management. Last year (2006) was the first year that the Coalition sponsored this month-long event and it was a complete success. The UBC Web site provides educational information for both professionals and the public and can be accessed at <http://www.utahbreastfeeding.org/>.

Healthy Weight in Women Action Learning Collaborative (ALC): Utah is one of eight states selected to participate in the ALC, which is funded by the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health (CDC/DRH), the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), and CityMatCH. The aim of the ALC is to build state and local capacity to help women of reproductive age achieve healthy weight before, during, and after pregnancy. The ALC brings together 8 multi-disciplinary teams to strengthen partnerships, implement evidence-based strategies, build community participation, and overcome challenges for improving preventive health for women of reproductive age. Utah's team consists of partners from the Utah Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department and WIC Program, and the University of Utah's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. These and other stakeholders are working together to develop a culturally and linguistically appropriate intervention to help women of reproductive age achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The intervention will be piloted in the Salt Lake Valley WIC clinics during the latter of half of 2007.
